

## Introduction

This report is concerned with the history of the North Spit of Coos Bay, Oregon. The area has been the locus of federal government activity almost continuously since the 1850s. Although no one resides on the North Spit in 2000, human occupation occurred in past eras. Government employees and, in some instances, their families resided on the spit. They occupied the "Government Works" at the project headquarters for the North Jetty and the facilities at the U.S. Life-Saving Service Station, later the U.S. Navy Radiocompass Station, on the east side of the spit nearly opposite Empire.

This report is concerned with the face of the North Spit and how it changed over time. Human intervention altered the spit by use of millions of dollars in congressional appropriations, carefully researched vegetative reclamation projects, and projects designed by civil engineers. The consequence is that the North Spit in 2000 is considerably larger and much more heavily vegetated than the wind-swept and wave-washed spit of sand where the U.S. Army castaways from the *Captain Lincoln* came ashore in 1852.

The following narrative addresses some of the major themes in human history on the spit and confirms the potentials for cultural interpretation of this location.

## **Acknowledgments**

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My labors took me to the Boley Law Library and Aubrey Watzek Library of Lewis and Clark College, the Knight Library at the University of Oregon, and the Oregon Historical Society library, Portland. In all instances staff members of these institutions helped facilitate my access to collections.

I also worked in the records of the Bureau of Land Management, Portland. The resources of the Oregon State Office, BLM, are invaluable for examining conditions of the land at the time of initial settlement and disposition of the public domain. Dean Delevan of the Oregon State Office facilitated access to the archival records held in Portland. I want to thank Steve Samuels of the Coos Bay BLM District who read and provided helpful suggestions on the draft of this study. To all who assisted or provided advice and counsel, I give my thanks.

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